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Fire inspectors tour Cattle Congress grounds

JEFF REINITZ, Courier Staff Writer

WATERLOO - The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center at the National Cattle Congress grounds passed inspection by the city fire marshal Wednesday.

On Wednesday afternoon, officials with Waterloo Fire Rescue toured the buildings that are occupied by ICE agents and housed an estimated 380 of the workers detained in Monday's Agriprocessors raid.

Battalion Chief Dave Boesen, the outgoing fire marshal, said he examined the facilities with newly appointed fire marshal Steve Jordan for safety issues.

"They were more than cooperative," Boesen said. He said the tour lasted about two hours.

Because of security reasons, Boesen could not elaborate on what's behind the chain-link fences at the NCC grounds. But he said federal authorities have plans in place to deal with emergencies, and the fire department is working with their plans.

Detainees are being housed in Estel Hall, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Electric Park Ballroom has been converted into a courtroom.

A number of mobile buildings and interior fences were also placed on the grounds for the operation.